

Wake Up Call

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Summary: In which Haymitch sees something he hadn't seen in twenty-four years in a place he least expected to find it; in the possession of this year's female tribute.

Wake Up Call

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Wake Up Call

Haymitch wakes with a massive headache and a tongue as dry as sandpaper. He's in some clean clothes but wonders how that can be when he distinctly remembers vomiting.

He feels a good sized bump on his head and vaguely remembers falling off a stage.

Shrugging, he exits his compartment on the Capitol train and searches for food.

He enters the dining car and is greeted by Effie.

She makes polite small talk. He ignores her.

Haymitch walks over to the table and is served food by an awaiting Avox the moment he sits down.

Looking down at his plate he sees eggs, ham, and a pile of fried potatoes. He stares at the rest of the table and sees a tureen of fruit set in ice, a glass of raspberry juice, and the basket of rolls they set before him that he failed to notice earlier.

At that moment his male tribute enters the carriage.

Haymitch takes in his stocky build, ashy blonde hair, and blue eyes and gives him about two days, assuming he'll live through the bloodbath.

"Morning," the tribute says when he realises he's being stared out.

"Good morning, Peeta!" Effie replies cheerfully.

The tribute â€“ Peeta â€“ takes a seat at the table.

Effie orders a black coffee and blows at it furiously when it arrives.

"Easy! Don't blow so hard," Haymitch can't resist saying suggestively.

She looks up at him, incredulous, as Peeta suddenly finds an interest in a roll from his basket.

Effie gets up abruptly from the table and marches off someplace else.

Good.

The boy picks up the roll and pretends to examine it, looking embarrassed. Haymitch chuckles as he notices Effie pass the door, muttering something he can't hear under her breath.

As she brushes by the door, he is aware that his other tribute has entered the car too.

"Sit down! Sit down!" Haymitch says, waving her over as he is feeling in a particularly good mood this morning.

She walks over and he takes the time to see what else he is working with this year.

This one has an aura of strength and independence. Spunk, he remembers labelling her.

Her hair is in a braid and she's in a dark green shirt and trousers. Something is pinned to her shirt and when Haymitch examines it closer, it's all he can do to stop any flashbacks from occurring.

His pulse quickens and he can practically smell the exotic and poisonous flora from twenty-four years ago. He feels a pain in his hands and realises he has his nails dug deeply into his palms.

Haymitch slowly releases the tension and reaches for the bottle of vodka.

Ignoring his food, having lost all appetite at the sight of _it_, he pours a bit of vodka into his glass of raspberry juice before drinking it.

He continues to drink and add more vodka, doing his best to emit an air of indifference and coolness when that couldn't be further from

the truth.

Just where the hell did she get that? he wonders, sneaking _it_ a few subtle peaks when he's sure no one notices.

Because he recognises it. Would have to be completely blind not to.

"They call it hot chocolate," he vaguely notices the boy inform the girl with the pin. "It's good."

He drowns them out, drowns the rest of the world out, and focus completely on his drink.

He continues adding more and more vodka as he slowly gets through his glass.

"So, you're supposed to give us advice," the girl is saying to Haymitch, and he forces himself not to look at _it_.

"Here's some advice," he replies, his head getting pleasantly lighter by the second, "Stay alive."

Then Haymitch bursts out laughing, realising he has barely been doing that himself for the last twenty-four years.

The tributes share a look before the boy speaks up. "That's very funny." He then suddenly lashes at the glass Haymitch is holding. It shatters on the carpeted floor, the raspberry mixed in with vodka pouring towards the back of the train carriage. "Only not to us."

Haymitch takes in the sight and considers his next carefully calculated move.

He decides to punch his insolent tribute in the jaw.

Pleased at the sight of him being knocked out of his chair, Haymitch turns back and reaches for the bottle of vodka. But is suddenly stopped when his other tribute drives her knife into the table between his fingers and the precious bottle.

He watches as she flinches, obviously expecting him to retaliate like he did the boy. Bored, Haymitch sits back down and squints at the sorry pair in front of him.

"Well, what's this?" he asks out loud. "Did I actually get a pair of fighters this year?"

The boy gets himself off the ground.

When he's reaching for the ice under the fruit tureen and raising it to his jaw, Haymitch stops him. "No, let the bruise show. The audience will think you've mixed it up with another tribute before you've even made it to the arena."

"That's against the rules," the boy points out.

"Only if they catch you," Haymitch says. "That bruise will say you fought, you weren't caught, even better." He turns to the girl. "Can

you hit anything with that knife besides a table?"

He watches as she wordlessly yanks out the knife from the table, getting a solid grip on the blade, and throws it across the room.

It lands in the seam between two panels.

Haymitch considers the pair he got this year for a moment. "Stand over here. Both of you," he instructs, nodding to the centre of the room.

They obey and he begins circling them, prodding them at times, checking their muscles, and examining their faces.

"Well, you're not entirely hopeless," Haymitch comments. "Seem fit. And once the stylists get hold of you, you'll be attractive enough."

His tributes don't question this. They do seem to know how it all works.

Good. It'll be much easier if they didn't question him every step of the way.

Haymitch feels as though its twenty-three years ago again. His first year of mentoring and that determination to at least bring one of them back.

He can't even remember the last time he even felt such determination.

"All right, I'll make a deal with you," he says. "You don't interfere with my drinking, and I'll stay sober enough to help you. But you have to do exactly what I say."

"Fine," the boy replies.

"So help us," the girl chimes in. "When we get to the arena, what's the best strategy at the Cornucopia for someone-"

"One thing at a time," Haymitch holds up a hand. "In a few minutes, we'll be pulling into the station. You'll be put into the hands of your stylists."

"You're not going to like what they do to you," he continues, remembering his own experience. "But no matter what it is, don't resist."

"But-" the girl begins.

"No buts. Don't resist." With that, Haymitch takes the bottle of vodka on the table before leaving the car, needing to get the hell out of there immediately.

He acted at ease in front of them, but as soon as he has left them behind, Haymitch leans tiredly against the car wall and runs a shaky hand down his face.

It had been over two long decades since he had last seen that mockingjay pin. He had been trying to do everything to forget its

previous owner.

And now, seeing it on his tribute, Haymitch can't help but wonder if this is her way of telling him to protect her. Her way of telling him that everything will be okay if he just places his trust in this kid.

Not that he ever believed that kind of nonsense.

Still leaning heavily against the panelled wall, he drags another hand down his face and sighs.

Maysilee..._

End
file.